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From: Humphrey, Robert [<mailto:RHumphrey@ci.berkeley.ca.us>]
Sent: Sunday, June 12, 2005 2:43 PM
To: Melissa Miller-Henson
Cc: 'nearshore@yahoogroups.com'
Subject: MLPA comments

Hi Melissa. Most of my concerns have been addressed by various comments, especially those from representatives of the RFA and the California Fisheries Coalition, but I would like to make one of my own. The question was asked at the first Stakeholder meeting, "what could derail this process?" I'd like to offer one answer to that question.

It has repeatedly been made very clear that this process will be guided by the "best available science". In order for that to happen it will be necessary to hear from perspectives that are both critical and supportive of the idea that marine reserves are uniquely necessary to meet certain objectives of the MLPA. As it is, there is widespread feeling among my constituency that much of the Science Team membership is currently committed financially and/or ideologically to the idea that a large percentage of coastal waters should become set aside as marine reserves. My argument here is not for or against that proposition. It is that, in order for the process to truly be guided by the "best available science", there must be serious consideration given to alternative scientific perspectives. Significantly including divergent scientific perspectives at some point in the process will go a long way toward alleviating concerns that any final scientific conclusions lack objectivity. As goes the public's perception of the process' objectivity, so goes it's perception of the process' credibility. In my opinion, this is the most serious concern expressed by the majority of those I communicate with. This issue therefore has the most potential to "derail the process", if anything does.

By the way, I know of very few who will argue against the idea that some level of reserve component on our coastline is necessary to meet the objectives of the MLPA. The scientific controversies arises over which objectives of the MLPA must be met exclusively in this way and not in other ways less hostile to public access, and what percentage of our coast must be used to meet these objectives. Again, to find credible answers to these questions, we need to hear from a variety of scientific perspectives.

Thank you very much. It is an honor and pleasure to be working with the quality of folks that I have seen so far in this process.

Bob Humphrey
Central California Council of Dive Clubs Director of Marine Resources